

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (original) A metal gasket for a cylinder head comprising:

two base plates (2) respectively made of metal plates and layered over each other, each of said base plates (2) including cylinder holes (2a) formed so as to correspond to respective cylinder bores on a cylinder block of an internal combustion engine, annular beads (2b) of an angled cross-sectional shape formed around said respective cylinder holes, coolant holes (2c) formed on outer peripheral portions of said respective annular beads so as to correspond to coolant jackets on said cylinder block and to coolant holes on a cylinder head of said internal combustion engine, and an outer peripheral bead (2d) having a cross-sectional shape sloping on one side and being formed in a position so as to totally surround said annular beads and said coolant holes;

an auxiliary plate (3) made of a metal plate and interposed between said two base plates; and

a hard metal-plated layer (5) formed on at least one surface of said auxiliary plate and configured to extend from a position more radially inward than said annular bead to a

position radially outward so as to overlap each of said annular beads of said base plate and to face a top portion of said annular bead, and thereby to surround each of said cylinder holes on said base plate annularly.

2. (original) The metal gasket for a cylinder head according to claim 1,

wherein an annular bead having an angled cross-sectional shape is formed on said auxiliary plate so as to overlap said annular bead on said base plate and to allow top positions to face each other.

3. (original) A metal gasket for a cylinder head comprising:

two base plates (2) respectively made of metal plates and layered over each other, each of said base plates (2) including cylinder holes (2a) formed so as to correspond to respective cylinder bores on a cylinder block of an internal combustion engine, annular beads (2b) of an angled cross-sectional shape formed around said respective cylinder holes, coolant holes (2c) formed on outer peripheral portions of said respective annular beads so as to correspond to coolant jackets on said cylinder block and to coolant holes on a cylinder head of said internal combustion engine, and an outer peripheral bead (2d) having a cross-sectional shape sloping on one side and being

formed in a position so as to totally surround said annular beads and said coolant holes; and

a hard metal-plated layer (5) formed on either one or both of said two base plates on a surface facing the other base plate and configured to extend from a position more radially inward than said annular bead to a position radially outward so as to overlap each of said annular beads of said base plate and to face a top portion of said annular bead, and thereby to surround each of said cylinder holes on said base plate annularly.

4. (previously presented) The metal gasket for a cylinder head according to claim 1,

wherein said hard metal-plated layer (5) is made of any of nickel, nickel-phosphorus, and copper, and has hardness equal to or above Hv 60.

5. (previously presented) The metal gasket for a cylinder head according to claim 1,

wherein distribution of an amount of a step of said hard metal-plated layer relevant to said plurality of cylinder holes (2a) corresponds to distribution of rigidity of said internal combustion engine relevant to said plurality of cylinder bores.

6-10. (canceled)

11. (currently amended) A metal gasket for a cylinder head comprising:

two base plates (2) respectively made of metal plates and layered over each other, each of said base plates (2) including cylinder holes (2a) formed so as to correspond to respective cylinder bores on a cylinder block of an internal combustion engine, annular beads (2b) of an angled cross-sectional shape formed around said respective cylinder holes, coolant holes (2c) formed on outer peripheral portions of said respective annular beads so as to correspond to coolant jackets on said cylinder block and to coolant holes on a cylinder head of said internal combustion engine, and an outer peripheral bead (2d) having a cross-sectional shape sloping on one side and being formed in a position so as to totally surround said annular beads and said coolant holes; and

soft surface metal-plated layers (7) formed on at least outer surfaces of said two base plates so as to cover at least said respective annular beads and configured to extend from a position more radially inward than said annular bead to a position radially outward so as to overlap each of said annular beads of said base plates, and thereby to surround each of said cylinder holes on said base plates annularly.

12. (currently amended) A metal gasket for a cylinder head comprising:

a single base plate (2) made of a metal plate and including cylinder holes (2a) formed so as to correspond to respective cylinder bores on a cylinder block of an internal combustion engine, annular beads (2b) of an angled cross-sectional shape formed around said respective cylinder holes, coolant holes (2c) formed on outer peripheral portions of said respective annular beads so as to correspond to coolant jackets on said cylinder block and to coolant holes on a cylinder head of said internal combustion engine, and an outer peripheral bead (2d) having a cross-sectional shape sloping on one side and being formed in a position so as to totally surround said annular beads and said coolant holes; and

soft surface metal-plated layers (7) formed on both surfaces of said base plate so as to cover at least said respective annular beads and configured to extend from a position more radially inward than said annular bead to a position radially outward so as to overlap each of said annular beads of said base plate, and thereby to surround each of said cylinder holes on said base plate annularly.

13. (currently amended) The metal gasket for a cylinder head according to claim 11,

wherein said soft surface metal-plated layer (7) is formed as any of a single layer and a plurality of layers using any of tin, copper, silver, and alloys thereof, and has surface hardness ~~equal to or~~ below Hv 60.

14. (previously presented) The metal gasket for a cylinder head according to claim 11,

wherein a thickness of said soft surface metal-plated layer (7) is set in a range from 3  $\mu\text{m}$  to 40  $\mu\text{m}$  inclusive.

15. (previously presented) The metal gasket for a cylinder head according to claim 2,

wherein said hard metal-plated layer (5) is made of any of nickel, nickel-phosphorus, and copper, and has hardness equal to or above Hv 60.

16. (previously presented) The metal gasket for a cylinder head according to claim 3,

wherein said hard metal-plated layer (5) is made of any of nickel, nickel-phosphorus, and copper, and has hardness equal to or above Hv 60.

17. (previously presented) The metal gasket for a cylinder head according to claim 2,

wherein distribution of an amount of a step of said hard metal-plated layer relevant to said plurality of cylinder holes (2a) corresponds to distribution of rigidity of said internal combustion engine relevant to said plurality of cylinder bores.

18. (previously presented) The metal gasket for a cylinder head according to claim 3,

wherein distribution of an amount of a step of said hard metal-plated layer relevant to said plurality of cylinder holes (2a) corresponds to distribution of rigidity of said internal combustion engine relevant to said plurality of cylinder bores.

19-20. (canceled)

21. (new) The metal gasket for a cylinder head according to claim 1, wherein the hard metal-plated layer (5) is an electroplated layer.

22. (new) The metal gasket for a cylinder head according to claim 1, wherein the hard metal-plated layer (5) is a molten metal plated layer.

23. (new) The metal gasket for a cylinder head according to claim 3, wherein the hard metal-plated layer (5) is an electroplated layer.

24. (new) The metal gasket for a cylinder head according to claim 11, wherein the soft surface metal-plated layers (7) are electroplated layers.

25. (new) The metal gasket for a cylinder head according to claim 11, wherein the soft surface metal-plated layers (7) are molten metal plated layers.

26. (new) The metal gasket for a cylinder head according to claim 12, wherein the soft surface metal-plated layers (7) are electroplated layers.

27. (new) The metal gasket for a cylinder head according to claim 12, wherein the soft surface metal-plated layers (7) are molten metal plated layers.